

Testimony of Rhonda Boisvert for HB 5037 Department of Social Services- Budget for Residential Care Homes

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France and members of the Appropriations subcommittee

It is my pleasure to speak with you today concerning the funding for all Residential Care Homes in Ct. For many years we have shared our concerns with you about being underfunded and the inability to give our employees a much needed increase in their salaries. This year the challenges are even greater.

My family owns two homes. We have a 15-bed facility in Haddam and an 18-bed facility in Watertown. Our residents are referred to us from families, hospitals and Behavioral Health Agencies. Our residents struggled to live in the community under high stressors such as not being able to manage their meals, taking medication, missing important medical appointments, and living in unsanitary conditions. Our homes provide a clean surrounding, nutritious meals, laundry services, transportation to medical appointments, and communication with social security and DSS as needed to keep their entitlements current. All of this is provided as an average for a mere \$88 per day

Our challenges are many. Low wages impede us from hiring good staff and keeping them. We need increases to make repairs on our property. Loans are difficult to get as the RCH business doesn't show a profit. There are times that owner/administrators wait until the end of the month to cash their check. We have paid our bills with our own personal money and taken out cash on our credit cards to keep our business afloat. We didn't receive additional funding during the pandemic like others have.

High inflation just like all businesses has become out of control. When an employee asked for a ride to work because her gas tank was low and she didn't have enough money to get gas, I thought this should not be happening. Everything that we do to keep our homes up and running has resulted in an increase. Food, gas, all of our insurances and many needed home repairs are just a few to name.

I feel that our homes take care of some of the most vulnerable people in Ct. Our rates don't even come close to keeping up with our costs. This is my 11th year testifying for my staff and residents. Last year when I testified, you said something will be done to help us. We were told they would reinvest Medicaid dollars. That hasn't happened yet and we are still waiting!

Thank you for listening to my remarks and please help residential care homes.

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